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ORGANIZED CRIME IN CALIFORNIA

The organized crime is a set of crimes committed by organized criminal groups. This is the activity of a group of people united in an organization that has a structure specially adapted for committing crimes. One of the most widespread forms of modern organized crime is the mafia.

At the same time, general signs of organized crime are:

- stable character;
- the goal is to obtain surplus profits;
- preliminary planning and definition of roles for all members of the group;
- a clear distinction between managers and executors;
- performing illegal activities or providing illegal services and withdrawing income by legal means;
- conspiratorial nature of activity;
- organization of general monetary resources;
- cooperation with the authorities, corruption [1, p. 294].

In turn, organized crime in California includes the conspiracy of a criminal group, the activities of which may be related to: gambling, prostitution, drug sales, large-scale theft, illegal loans, prostitution, fraud, etc.

Among the investigated types of crime in California can be committed by organized criminal groups, gangs, criminal extremists and terrorists.

It is worth noting that organized crime in California is represented by the following groups: Camorra, Sicilian mafia, La Cosa Nostra (LCN), Eurasian criminal network, criminal cells from Eastern Europe, Latin America and Southeast Asia [3]. These groups specialize in fraud, prostitution, official crime and human trafficking.

The main danger to the public in California today is the migration of the LCN crime family from the East Coast to the West of the state, as this group engages in illegal bookmaking, drug trafficking, extortion and interference with legal business structures.

In California, federal and state laws provide for measures to control the property of criminal groups, to prevent corruption, and to prosecute organized crime.

These laws are originally intended to limit the financial gains of members of criminal groups, stop the flow of illegal funds and prevent further criminal activities, which occurs by imposing an arrest on property and confiscation of assets [4].

It should be noted that the most common crimes committed by organized groups in California are robbery and theft [5; 6]. These groups control certain urban areas (mainly poor areas on the outskirts of the city, characterized by high levels of unemployment. Such areas have the unofficial name "ghettos"). These groups, regardless of their number, are simply called gangs. Most often, these OZUs are formed on the basis of race or ethnicity, although representatives of other races and ethnic groups are often included in ethnic groups. At the same time, the so-called megagangs - criminal groups whose number is more than 10,000 people - stand out. The mega-gangs operating in Los Angeles include African-American gangs Crips, Bloods, Pirus, Latin American gangs Mara Salvatrucha, 18th Street gang, Latin Kings, as well as two communities of Latin American gangs — Nortenos and Surenos. The largest of these RAMs are Mara Salvatrucha, Crips and Bloods.[2]

The main reason for these crimes is the high level of unemployment in the state [7].

Crimes using social networks, electronic systems and funds are also becoming more common.

The detection and investigation of organized crime is the competence of the California Department of Justice and the Bureau of Investigation, which ensure the fight against organized criminal groups and gangs, through the collection, analysis and distribution of criminal information among law enforcement agencies [8, p. 1-2].

In addition, there is a Violent and Organized Crime Unit (VOCS) which deals with the prosecution of some of the most dangerous criminals. This includes cases involving murder, kidnapping, armed robbery, and others.

California also has the Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) program, which aims to coordinate the efforts of federal and state law enforcement agencies, as well as community groups in the fight against the use of firearms by criminals, particularly violent gangs [9].

As practice in the USA shows, the results of the strategy to fight organized crime have been the widespread use of punishments in the form of deprivation of liberty.

At the same time, under California and federal law, gang members convicted of felony crimes often receive harsher sentences than criminals who committed similar offenses but were not gang members [10].

So, we can come to the conclusion that despite the large number of bodies to combat organized crime in California, local legislation needs improvement, taking into account modern manifestations of crimes committed by a group of persons.

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